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ABSTRACT

The paper describes an ethnic studies project which was designed in 1975 to foster communication across intercultural/ethnic lines in the newly integrated public schools of Louisville, Kentucky. Resulting from cooperative efforts of the Louisville Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson County Public Schools, and the Center for International Education of the University of Louisville, the project focussed on the following tasks: (1) organizing an ethnic heritage conference for Louisville teachers, students, and community members; (2) evaluating existing ethnic heritage curriculum materials; (3) producing television documentaries and monographs describing ethnic groups; (4) compiling a Louisville community resources index; and (5) organizing ethnic and cultural fairs in local junior high and high schools. Evaluation of the project reveals increasing interest in ethnic studies, despite specific shortcomings due to attempting too many tasks in too short a period with too little money. Tangible outcomes of the one year project include the development of 12 new curriculum units and six television documentaries. The conclusion is that the project created a foundation for ethnic studies curriculum. (Author/DB)

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE LOUISVILLE
AREA ETHNIC HERITAGE STUDIES
TEACHER TRAINING AND CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT¹

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Introduction

This project was a cooperative effort of three Louisville area institutions: the Bicentennial Corporation of the Louisville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson County Public Schools, and the Center for International Education of the University of Louisville. The project was directed by Dr. Edward H. Berman and Dr. Everett Egginton of the University of Louisville. Dr. James Stone, Director of the Education Development Center of the Jefferson County Public Schools, acted as the project liaison from that institution. Ms. Dell Courtney, Special Events Coordinator of the Louisville Bicentennial Corporation, served in a similar capacity from the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Ernesto Gittli, chairman of the Louisville Area Advisory Council on Ethnic Heritage Studies, represented that organization.

Proposal

Since 1974, the Bicentennial Corporation of the Louisville Area Chamber of Commerce, with support from local corporate concerns and in cooperation with a local Ethnic Heritage Advisory Committee, has sponsored a series of ethnic heritage weekends. During these two-day festivals representatives of local ethnic groups have organized programs (dances, music, games, plays, poetry recitals, exhibitions of handicrafts, meals, illustrative of their ethnic heritage. In the summer and autumn of 1977 thirteen weekends were held and were attended by approximately 650,000 Louisville area citizens.

Also during the last several years the Jefferson County (Louisville) Board of Education has reorganized its curriculum in an attempt to take cognizance of the ethnic diversity of America's population. Prior to the ethnic heritage studies project, the foci of numerous courses had been expanded to deal with ethnicity and the contribution of various ethnic groups to America's development. Additionally new courses had been added to the curriculum, particularly at the middle and high school level. For example, students in grade 11 were able to select from courses offered in African, Latin American and Asian studies, while the seniors were able to select from options offered in minority studies, black studies or contemporary sociological problems.

In view of the 1975 merger of the predominantly white and suburban Jefferson County School District with the predominantly black and urban Louisville Independent School District, the change in curricular orientation referred to is particularly important. This merger created the 12th largest school district in the United States, and ushered in a host of problems for students, teachers and school administrators. Many of these problems have received extensive national coverage in the media. Implicit in many of the problems brought on by merger is the apparent inability of several groups to communicate across intercultural/ethnic lines. While school personnel, civic groups, University advisors and outside consultants worked with school and community groups in an attempt to facilitate intercultural communication, their efforts were initiated late. The magnitude of the task which confronted the Louisville community was, and remains, truly staggering.

The ethnic heritage studies project was one response to this problem of intercultural communication. It is indeed lamentable that it was the

problems made manifest by merger and desegregation which brought together personnel from the University of Louisville, the Jefferson County School District and the Louisville Bicentennial Corporation to work on a project whose intent was to alleviate the problem of intercultural understanding. But that they did come together at all was fortuitous for out of their planning meetings evolved the ethnic heritage studies project which we are learning about today.

During the summer of 1975 and immediately after merger, the project directors made contact with the Louisville Bicentennial Corporation, specifically with the coordinator of the Heritage Weekends. The possibility that each Heritage Weekend staff might play a role in strengthening the curricula and programs in the local schools to reflect greater emphasis on ethnic heritage studies, and greater attention to the needs of a culturally diverse society prompted the coordinator's initial response-- "Super." This, she continued, was the kind of opportunity the heritage weekend staff had been looking for, an opportunity to contribute community resources reflecting the rich cultural heritage and diversity to strengthen the educational program for the 120,000 children in the Jefferson County Public School District.

This reaction prompted the first meeting of the Planning Committee of the Louisville Area Ethnic Heritage Studies Teacher Training and Curriculum Development Project. The Planning Committee consisted of two representatives from the University of Louisville, three representatives from the Jefferson County Public School District, and the coordinator of the Louisville Bicentennial Corporation of the Louisville Area Chamber of Commerce in charge of the Heritage Weekends. The primary function of the Planning Committee was to organize the Louisville Area Advisory Council on

Ethnic Heritage Studies, as well as to document the needs and develop a series of strategies for dealing with these needs in the area of ethnic heritage studies to be considered by the Advisory Council. The Planning Committee met eight times between September and November 1975. The Louisville Area Advisory Council on Ethnic Heritage Studies met as a whole for the first time on December 6 for the express purpose of:

- A. considering the recommendations of the Planning Committee;
- B. developing short term and long term objectives for the Advisory Council;
- C. assigning members to standing committees to oversee and assist the Jefferson County teachers as they develop curricula and materials in ethnic heritage studies.

Out of these different planning sessions and activities came the proposal submitted to the Ethnic Heritage Studies Division of the United States Office of Education.

Project

The Louisville Area Ethnic Heritage Studies Teacher Training and Curriculum Development Project--the formal and complete name for the project--was organized around six interrelated program areas:

- 1. The evaluation of existing curricular materials concerned with Ethnic Heritage studies available in the Jefferson County Public School system, and the development and testing of several new curricular units for utilization in the school system.
- 2. The production and airing of a series of television documentaries on the culture and history of several ethnic groups.
- 3. The organization of a conference in Louisville devoted to the

topic of ethnic heritage studies and cultural pluralism in American society, and designed for teachers, students, and community representatives in the greater Louisville area.

4. The organization of ethnic and cultural fairs in six Louisville middle and high schools.

5. The production of a monograph series detailing the contributions of several ethnic groups to the Louisville area for use in local schools.

6. The compilation of community resources index, detailing the available materials--print, film, tape, personnel--for utilization by Louisville school personnel and interested parties; this was designed to strengthen the Media Resource Centers of the Jefferson County Public School system and the University of Louisville's School of Education.

Each of these areas will be briefly described below:

Curriculum Development

The major tasks assigned to the curriculum development teams included 1) the assessment of existing curricular materials dealing with ethnic heritage studies available in the Jefferson County Public School system, 2) the creation of several curriculum units dealing with ethnic heritage studies, and 3) the administration of an attitudinal survey designed to elicit information regarding the perceptions by students of topics related to ethnic studies and to particular ethnic groups.

The assessment of the applicability and accuracy of existing curricular materials was made possible by a document developed by the curriculum teams and called the Ethnic Studies Materials Analysis Instrument. Existing materials were evaluated according to the criteria delineated in this instrument and the results of this evaluation can be seen in the final report which is on display.

Twelve new curricular units were designed by the curriculum development teams, and may be viewed after this formal presentation. During the Spring of 1977 these new curriculum units were tested in a number of preselected middle and high schools. On the basis of this trial, seven of the units were revised by the curriculum development teams, working with curriculum specialists from the Curriculum Division of the Jefferson County Public Schools, during the summer of 1977. These revised units are currently being reviewed by the Curriculum Office of the Jefferson County Public School District and will be published shortly. It is my understanding that several of these are available and have been included in the display. The remaining five curriculum units, which are being tested further in local schools, are still available for use by teachers in the school system.

The pretest/posttest attitudinal survey, which was administered to students in six preselected schools by members of the curriculum teams in conjunction with several teachers, may also be viewed after the presentation. The rather extensive data collected on the attitudes of Louisville school children are currently being processed and will be analyzed shortly. The conclusions culled from this analysis will be used by a task force on human relations of Jefferson County Public Schools in developing recommendations for curriculum modification.

Television Documentaries

The six television documentaries dealing with various ethnic groups and their relationship to the Louisville community were aired on public television, WKPC-TV, Channel 15, commencing on January 7, 1977 and concluding on February 18, 1977. Additionally, to coincide with the six cultural fairs, these programs were broadcast in all Jefferson County

schools equipped with television during the week preceding the individual fairs. For example, the documentary on Latin American cultural heritage was shown during the week beginning March 7 to coincide with the Latin American cultural fair held at Westport High School on March 11, 1977.

Conference on Ethnic Heritage Studies

The Conference on Ethnic Heritage Studies in a Pluralistic Society, the third of the project's six components, was held in the University Center of the University of Louisville on October 22-23, 1977. The conference brought together for the first time all parties concerned with the ethnic heritage project. While the total number of participants at the conference fell somewhat short of the number expected, approximately 150 students, teachers and community representatives attended. Those who attended were largely the same ones who participated actively in other aspects of the project. The camaraderie among those present was a delight to behold, and is evidence of a willingness on the part of a significant element of the community to work together toward the end of engendering in school children an appreciation of cultural diversity.

The conference was a two-day affair and consisted of two formal workshop sessions, an official greeting to the participants from the Executive Vice President of the University of Louisville, a keynote address on the topic "Ethnicity in the Classroom," and an ethnic banquet.

Cultural Fairs

Cultural fairs were held in six Louisville middle and high schools during March, April, and May, 1977. These events were originally scheduled for January and February, but a combination of a lengthy teachers strike and inclement weather necessitated rescheduling. In order to provide an overview and assessment of each of the cultural fairs, the project

directors asked the fair organizers at each school to complete a questionnaire regarding their particular event. These questionnaires provide the basis for the analysis of these events which follows. An additional information source for this assessment was the attendance at each fair by one or both of the project directors.

A marked aspect of each of the six fairs was the degree of cooperation between school personnel and community representatives. These cooperative relationships were initiated during the early planning stages for each fair and were maintained through the fairs' conclusion. Indeed, even a cursory glance at the completed questionnaires suggests that without the significant degree of cooperation between school personnel and community representatives that there would have been no cultural fairs at all.

Both the questionnaires and numerous conversations with fair participants suggest the significant degree to which these events helped to sensitize students (and teachers as well) to the realities of ethnic differences and to the contributions of various groups to the community. Although this "sensitizing" aspect of the fairs is difficult to quantify, it would appear justified to state that numerous youngsters came away from the events with more positive feelings, or at least less hostile attitudes, towards the cultures featured in the several fairs.

Even if one allows for some degree of inflation (understandable, perhaps, since the estimates are those of the fair organizers themselves), the number of individuals who partook in the six cultural fairs is significant. Exactly how many of the estimated 11,400 in attendance at the fairs had their attitudes altered towards the positive end of the attitudinal continuum is impossible to judge; however, we suspect that the number may have been significant.

An unintended, but nonetheless important, benefit growing out of the activities surrounding the cultural fairs was the degree of school cohesiveness that the events engendered. Both school administrators and faculty commented on this. This growth of school spirit is especially noteworthy in the Louisville area because the trauma associated with two years of busing has contributed to a marked decline in the feeling of school loyalty, particularly among middle and high school students. This diminution of school loyalty has been attributable to the feeling on the part of students that since busing necessitates their frequent movement to different schools during their school careers that they do not want to make an emotional commitment to any particular school, where they may only spend a year or two. To a certain degree, work on the cultural fairs reversed this trend.

Monograph Series

The compilation of the monograph series intended to detail the contribution to the Louisville area of selected ethnic communities has been the least satisfactory aspect of the project. Although initial enthusiasm for work on the series was high, the writing of these monographs has proven more difficult than the eager volunteers anticipated. The problem here, perhaps, derives from the fact that whatever the good intentions of well-meaning amateur chroniclers, the writing of studies such as those envisioned is more generally the work of professional--or at least well-practice non-professional--writers. These simply have not been available to the project from the local ethnic communities. Notwithstanding these frustrations, it has been possible to bring together two studies of the ethnic contributions to Louisville. These are the French and the Jews. The former was written by Dr. Robert Burnett of the University of Louisville Department of

History and the latter by Clarence Judah of the Jewish Community Federation of Louisville. Additionally, Mr. Frank de Sensi is working on a monograph on the Italian community in Louisville and hopes to have this completed by year's end.

Community Resource Index

The Community Resources Index, the sixth component of this project, is available for your perusal. The Index as it now stands is incomplete. Although a significant amount of labor was expended to locate and document the works listed in the Index, it suffers from being limited to printed, visual, and taped materials, while omitting the various numerous personnel resources available in the community. Also, a perusal of the Index will reveal its lack of balance, e.g., the numerous pages of reference to works on American Blacks and the scanty references to the French and Greeks. Although we are not satisfied with this aspect of the project and have plans to search out the existing ethnic-related materials for inclusion in the Index more thoroughly, we do feel that it does provide a solid foundation upon which to build a more complete and serviceable Community Resources Index that can be utilized both by school personnel and interested members of the community.

Evaluation

An evaluation of this project must attempt to ascertain the intangible outcomes from the year's work as well as those which can be more easily measured. But let us say a few words about the tangible outcomes first by looking at each of the six project components in turn.

The curricular materials component certainly accomplished the objectives that the project directors established initially. In addition

to the production of 12 new units for classroom use, information is now available to indicate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the ethnic-related curricular materials that the Jefferson County Public School System holds. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the top, we feel justified in assigning this component of the project a rating of 8.

The six television documentaries on different ethnic groups far exceeded our expectations. They were professionally produced, demonstrated a marked degree of sophistication, were visually attractive, and, perhaps most importantly, seemed to have engendered real interest and enthusiasm from both the general public and from the schoolchildren. They were broadcast repeatedly and remain available for utilization within the school system. We cannot say enough about the production crew assigned to the task by Mr. Bob Richardson, Coordinator of Instructional Television Services of the Jefferson County Public Schools. The in-kind services donated by those responsible for the documentaries' production was significant and was gladly, even enthusiastically given. On the same 1 to 10 rating scale, even the most demanding critic would have to award this component of the project a resounding 10.

The conference on Ethnic Studies in a Pluralistic Society was the third component of the project. The two workshop panels, dealing with ethnicity, perceptions, and curriculum strategies, were run by acknowledged experts in the field. The banquet was well attended, the speaker delivered a most interesting talk (more especially since he was pressed into service at the last moment because of the illness of the scheduled keynote speaker), and people seemed genuinely to enjoy themselves. Our only regret was the small number of people who attended the workshop sessions, both of which were very meaningful and helpful, at least according to the assessments of

those who did attend. This problem of attendance is, of course, related to a larger problem of our public schools across the country, i.e., how to get school people involved in out-of-school conferences and activities designed to help them in the classroom. Despite the concerted efforts made to encourage school people to attend (e.g., all sessions were free, were held after school on Friday and on a Saturday morning, were geared to particular problems with which they were expected to cope), the attendance was disappointing. While we could derive consolation from the fact that this is not an isolated phenomenon, the experience still proves frustrating. On our rating scale, the conference would received an 8-9.

The cultural fairs, component four of the project, were very successful. They were well attended, were organized by school committees working closely with community representatives, and were valuable ways to sensitize youngsters (and surely some oldsters as well!) to cultural diversity and its attributes. Much time and great effort was expended by numerous individuals in organizing and implementing the fairs, which seemed to have fulfilled the expectations set for them. On our rating scale, the fairs would receive a 9.

The problems inherent in the production of the monograph series on ethnicity in Louisville have been noted above. On the scale of 1 to 10, this component of the project receives a rating of 2-3.

Although the Community Resources Index does not include all the resources available for the study of ethnic heritage studies in the Louisville area, it does at least form a foundation upon which future work will be built. The format for collecting the information is satisfactory; what remains to be done is more a problem of concerted leg work than one of conceptualization. Numerous resources are available in this community

for the study of ethnic heritage studies and the appropriate forms exist to collect this information. Individuals must set about to record the resources that are here. On our rating scale, the Community Resources Index receives the rating of 5-6.

Despite the relatively low marks assigned to several aspects of the project, we are well satisfied with the total accomplishments achieved during the year. In retrospect, we recognize that we attempted to accomplish too many tasks in too short a period with too little money. Given more time and money, we would include all components of the project again, with the exception of the monograph series. It was chimerical to think that we could accomplish this component without more professional expertise. We are, however, convinced of the importance and indeed of the possibilities inherent in the other components.

Follow-up

I think that we can say with some accuracy that the year's experience has indeed led the Jefferson County Public School system to further its efforts in the area of ethnic heritage studies. Specifically, the project has led the school system to create a Task Force on Human Relations. Indicative also of the increased level of interest in ethnic heritage studies is the fact that the project co-directors have been approached by a representative of this Task Force to solicit help in preparing a proposal applying for a foreign curriculum consultant to come to Louisville during the 1978-79 academic year. Under terms of our proposal, a group of Jefferson County school personnel will travel to Colombia during the summer of 1978 under the general guidance of the University of Louisville's Center for International Education and International Center. It is doubt-

ful if such a series of proposals would have been considered had it not been for the cooperation of the two institutions while working on the Ethnic Heritage Studies project this past year.

Also as a result of this project, personnel from the University's International Center have played a key role in the organization of the Multicultural Education Committee of the Kentucky Association of College Teachers of Education (KACTE), a consortium involving personnel from 16 Kentucky institutions of higher education. With the active encouragement of this group, personnel at the University of Louisville are making plans to apply for a dissemination grant from the Ethnic Heritage Studies Office. This proposal will build on the Community Resources Index component of last year's project and will attempt to collect in a central location ethnic-related materials from across Kentucky, whose availability can then be made known to representatives from cooperating institutions and from the community at large. This state-wide interest surely derives from the Ethnic Heritage Studies project.

And lastly, mention should be made of the impact of this project on the Louisville community at large. While we have reason to believe that numerous school children and school personnel have been directly affected for the good by this project, we are no less certain that the extensive publicity and public activities (TV documentaries, ethnic banquet, cultural fairs, informal discussions) of this project can only have helped to heighten peoples' awareness of the positive aspects of the community's cultural diversity.

Footnote

¹This paper synthesizes the information included in the original proposal submitted to the Ethnic Heritage Studies Division of the United States Office of Education as well as the interim and final reports of the funded project. The proposal was written by Dr. Edward Berman and Dr. Everett Egginton. The interim report was written by Dr. Everett Egginton and the final report was written by Dr. Edward Berman.

STAFF ORIENTATION

DAY ONE

1. SSEC Physical Organization (tour conducted by supervisor or co-worker):
 - A. Receipt of ERC building map.
 - B. Location of employee's desk/office.
 - C. Location of employee's supervisor/co-workers/support staff - including personal introductions.
 - D. Location of supply room and duplicating room - including a brief review of xerox machine procedures.
 - E. Location of mail and publications room.
 - F. Location of kitchen and restrooms.
 - G. Location and brief identification of all tenants of the ERC building.
2. Professional Materials:
 - A. Receipt of necessary materials and supplies.
 - B. Receipt of phone list.
 - C. Receipt of accounting/telephone system memorandum.
3. Employee Benefits Orientation (conducted by Ken Butts):
 - A. Review of vacation, sick leave, comp-time - including time sheets.
 - B. Review of insurance plans.
 - C. Review of retirement plans.
 - D. Review of parking arrangements.
 - E. Review of coffee arrangements.
4. SSEC Project/Staff Organization:
 - A. Review of SSEC "Project Book."
 - B. Review of SSEC/ERIC Brochures.
 - C. Review of "The Link."
 - D. Review of SSEC publications list.
5. Resource Complex (conducted by Regina McCormick):
 - A. Orientation to the contents and functions of the RDC, RIE, CIJE, and professional library.
 - B. Review of the contents of the resource complex - approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 hour of browsing time.

STAFF ORIENTATION

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6. Professional Orientation (conducted by the Executive Director):

- A. Review of the goals of the organization - SSEC.
- B. Review of expectations and requirements of the organization for staff members
- C. Review of staff evaluation procedures - including how and when a staff member will be evaluated.

7. Professional Orientation (conducted by the supervisor):

- A. Review of the goals of the project.
- B. Review of specific tasks or areas for which the staff member will be responsible - including time-lines if applicable.
- C. Review of the responsibilities of other project staff.

DAY TWO

1. Professional Orientation (assisted by a co-worker):

- A. Review of project materials - including original proposal.
- B. Review of project procedures.
- C. Continued review of the contents of the resource complex.
- D. Second review of the SSEC "Project Book."

MONTH ONE

- 1. As required by the staff member's duties or directed by personal interest, the staff member should meet with staff of other projects to obtain more in-depth information about those projects - including their goals, staff, materials developed, dissemination procedures utilized, evaluation procedures, etc.
- 2. As time and interest permits, staff members should schedule brief orientation sessions on:
 - A. Computer searches (with Regina McCormick).
 - B. Abstracting (with Alice Vigliani).
 - C. Fry Readability (with Judy Hedstrom).
 - D. CMAS (with Fran Haley).